

Historic Environment Considerations for London's Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)

Nature recovery projects provide opportunities to deliver joint outcomes for biodiversity, heritage and communities. Well-designed projects can deliver co-benefits by improving biodiversity while enhancing heritage assets and contributing to local distinctiveness and sense of place. To enable this, nature recovery projects should be planned and implemented to minimise harm to heritage assets and their settings. Where possible, projects should go further by seeking opportunities to enhance London's historic environment.

This note provides information on the steps to take to identify whether there are historic environment considerations on your site. It then identifies sources of advice and guidance that can help you to successfully integrate heritage into your project.

What is the historic Environment?

The historic environment is broadly defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as: *All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.*

Natural and historic environments are inseparable. Human activity over time has helped to create and sustain key habitats. Using the historic environment to inform nature recovery measures will result in more effective responses to the climate and nature emergencies while helping to conserve our cultural heritage. It will also help to ensure that measures are locally distinctive, integrate with their surroundings and bolster the sense of place of local communities. Historic England provides [technical advice and guidance on nature recovery and heritage](#) on their website.

Heritage assets are those aspects of the historic environment meriting consideration in planning and land management decisions. The combined heritage interests that make these assets important are referred to as their 'significance'. They include, but are not limited to, designated heritage assets (world heritage sites, conservation areas, listed buildings, scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens, and battlefields). The NPPF recognises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Conservation extends to ensuring an appropriate setting for heritage assets, that is, the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced.

How can I check my site?

Many of the Potential Measure Locations identified in the London LNRS include heritage assets. Start by checking whether your site contains any of these. There are multiple sources of information available on the historic environment. To assess the potential heritage impacts of a nature recovery project, it is essential to consult a broad range of

these sources at an early stage. Key datasets are outlined below. Additional relevant information may also be held by local planning authorities, landowners, or other organisations. Examples include Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Conservation Management Plans.

The National Heritage List for England (NHLE)

This is the official register of all nationally protected historic buildings and sites in England. At the time of writing, within the area of Greater London, the NHLE includes over 19,000 listed buildings, and some 173 scheduled monuments, 168 registered parks and gardens, 1 registered battlefield, and 4 World Heritage Sites. The NHLE can be accessed here: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>.

The City of London and 32 London boroughs have also designated more than 1000 conservation areas. These are not on the NHLE, and further information can instead be found on the website of the relevant local planning authority.

Greater London Historic Environment Record (GLHER)

This is the primary information source specifically for London's historic environment, which also includes non-designated heritage assets. This is managed by Historic England on behalf of the London boroughs: <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/our-planning-services/greater-london-archaeology-advisory-service/greater-london-historic-environment-record/>

The Selected Heritage Inventory for Natural England (SHINE) is a special collection of information concerning historic sites and places in England that helps landowners and agencies involved in land management to identify and positively manage heritage assets on their land. There is an aspiration to make SHINE data for Greater London accessible through the GLHER.

London's Archaeological Priority Areas (APA)

These provide a broad-brush indication for planning purposes of where significant archaeological remains are known or likely to be found. This includes many parks, open spaces and a lot of greenbelt land due to these areas often possessing historic landscape value and good preservation conditions, having largely avoided modern development. Further information on APAs and when planning applications are likely to require archaeological assessment can be found online: <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/planning/our-planning-services/greater-london-archaeology-advisory-service/greater-london-archaeological-priority-areas/>. Some APAs are undergoing review so it is important to check that you have the most up to date information.

Heritage at Risk

Historic England maintains the [Heritage at Risk Register](#) (HARR), which highlights historic buildings, parks and monuments vulnerable to neglect or decay. Checking whether your site or any features within it are included on the HARR can help inform your project planning – ensuring the scheme avoids further harm and, where possible, contributes to their improvement.

Other sources of historic environment data

Conservation Area boundaries, along with information on the NHLE, APAs, Heritage at Risk and other datasets are available as open data:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/data-downloads/>

A range of information including Conservation Area boundaries can also be found on the Greater London Authority's Planning Data Map: <https://apps.london.gov.uk/planning/>.

Does my activity require consent?

A range of consents may be required before a nature recovery project can be undertaken. While many schemes will not require planning permission, it is possible that other types of heritage consent will be needed. [Historic England provide guidance on various heritage consents](#) which can be found online. Two of the most relevant heritage consents for nature recovery schemes are:

- **Scheduled Monument Consent:** required before any work can be carried out which might affect a scheduled monument either above or below ground level.
- **Listed Building Consent:** required if you want to demolish, alter or extend a listed building in a way that affects its character or appearance as a building of special architectural or historic interest.

It is a criminal offence to undertake works without the appropriate Listed Building Consent or Scheduled Monument Consent.

Sources of advice and guidance

A wide range of advice and guidance can be found online that will help you to ensure that your proposals are sensitive to the historic environment.

For example, advice on [Nature Recovery and Heritage](#) can be found on Historic England's website. This includes guidance by Natural England, along with information on a range of land uses such as agriculture, woodlands, public parks, gardens and landscapes, waterbodies and wetlands including lakes and water features.

Historic England's web pages on [Caring for Rural Heritage](#) provide information that is also relevant to parts of Greater London, including advice on woodland creation and agri-environment schemes.

Historic England's technical advice on [Looking After Monuments and Sites](#) also deals with a wide range of wildlife habitats and species.

Who can I speak to?

If your project or activity is likely to affect heritage assets, you should consider engaging a suitably qualified heritage professional to provide specialist advice.

In addition, depending on the nature of your project, you may be able to obtain advice from organisations such as Historic England or the local Borough Council. Examples of potential sources of advice are listed below. Please note that arrangements may vary:

- If your proposal area includes a Scheduled Monument, you should contact Historic England’s London office to discuss its effective management and conservation. Contact details can be found on Historic England’s website.
- If you are unsure whether planning permission or listed building consent are required, you can seek confirmation from the local planning authority. Where heritage assets are likely to be affected, you may be able to obtain pre-application advice from Historic England, the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service or the local planning authority. Information on pre-application advice arrangements for different organisations can be found online.
- The [Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service](#) (GLAAS) can also advise on a range of activities which may affect archaeology or offer opportunities for enhancing, restoring or better revealing historic features or landscape character. Further information can be found online with the GLHER and in the Charter for GLAAS services.
- If your activity relates to a site or building on the [Heritage at Risk Register](#), a contact at Historic England or the local planning authority is included with each heritage asset on the register.
- Historic England provides targeted support for some land management and rural heritage activities. This includes agri-environment schemes such as Countryside Stewardship and Environmental Land Management. While these are focused primarily on countryside heritage, this advice is also applicable to some areas of Greater London. Further information can be found on Historic England’s web pages: [Support and Funding for Rural Heritage](#).